



Giving Thanks, Looking Ahead

This month, we honor the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, past and present, and give thanks for the many blessings that distinguish the United States among all other nations in the world. I personally am thankful for the opportunity to serve alongside the Soldiers, Families and Civilians of this great Army. Each of you makes a tremendous impact every day, and I continue to be humbled by your service and sacrifice.

We have much to be thankful for as an Army. This past September, we officially transitioned from a combat mission to an advisory and assistance role in Iraq, marking the conclusion of more than seven years of armed conflict there and the transition to an Iraqi-led mission. Every member of our Army Family — Soldiers and Leaders on the front lines and those in support roles at the rear, loved ones maintaining watch at home and Civilian employees providing the foundation for sustained operations — has played a vital part in bringing this outstanding accomplishment to fruition. As we refocus our full attention to our continued role in Afghanistan, rely on the experience and knowledge you've gained thus far and the expertise of those around you to keep all your Soldiers safe and in the fight.

November is also the time of year we begin to compile the data outlining our Army's safety performance during the previous fiscal year. The good news is that, in fiscal 2010, we did not see a significant increase in Soldier fatalities following the historic reductions made in fiscal 2009. In safety, we always say a loss is a loss, no matter how it happens. But on the flip side, every Soldier saved is a Soldier saved, whether it's attributed to engaged leadership, intervention by Family and friends or simply increased awareness by the Soldier through education and training. We've learned over the past two years that all three of these measures work, but clearly the most important constant that time and again makes the largest difference across our Army is engaged leadership. The most critical point of this engagement is at the lowest level, where Leaders know their Soldiers the best. The senior Leader's role is not only to also remain engaged, but to support their subordinate Leaders through mentorship and example.

The hectic holiday season will get underway soon, and I ask that you redouble your efforts in keeping both yourself and your Soldiers, whether subordinates or peers, safe. The long holiday weekends observing Veterans Day and Thanksgiving Day will offer plenty of time for road trips, leisurely excursions close to home and food and fellowship with Family and friends. Use every tool in your safety arsenal to ensure everyone makes it back safely after the holiday, and start by talking to your Soldiers about their plans. You might be surprised at how open they'll be, so take advantage of this time to offer suggestions for mitigating the risks associated with each

Soldier's scheduled activities. The new "comments" feature on the Travel Risk Planning System presents a great opportunity for subordinates and supervisors to open a dialogue on driving safety. Check out the tool at <https://safety.army.mil>.

By now, the chill of fall and winter can be felt in nearly every location our Army operates. Cooler temperatures and severe winter weather create hazards for our Army team both on and off duty, especially when working outside or driving on slippery roads. The USACR/Safety Center recently launched this year's Fall/Winter Safety Campaign ("No Time to Chill") to provide Leaders, safety officers and Soldiers vital information for staying safe during fall and winter activities. The 2010 campaign kit includes feature articles, posters and videos promoting awareness and mitigation of fall and winter hazards. All campaign products can be viewed and downloaded via the USACR/Safety Center website. Also be sure to encourage the hunters in your unit to visit the Firearms Safety Techniques challenge available on our website. While the challenge does not replace hunter education classes, it is a great awareness tool for weapons enthusiasts and hunters alike.

I thank you again for your contributions to the accomplishments of this past year and what you do every day for our Soldiers, Families and Civilians. Take that same passion forward in fiscal 2011, and remember to always stay engaged, stay informed and stay safe in everything you do. And wherever your plans take you, have a great November!

Army Safe is Army Strong!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

WILLIAM T. WOLF
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding